

CHAPTER 6 UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The construction and operation of the proposed action or any of the alternatives would result in some unavoidable adverse environmental impacts. The following is a description of these impacts grouped by topic.

Land Use. Placement of physical structures and access roads would unavoidably change the nature of land use both on and outside of the Coronado National Forest.

Recreation and Visual. Because portions of each alternative would be visible to some local residents, visitors on and off the Coronado National Forest, and people traveling on portions of Interstate 19 (I-19) and other area roads, the proposed project would have an adverse long-term impact on the viewshed. This would alter the recreational setting in the vicinity of the proposed project.

Biological Resources. Increased access to the area has the potential to disturb biological resources. Where requested by landowners or land managers, Tucson Electric Power Company (TEP) would maintain locked gates to new roads required for project maintenance to limit public access. Construction and operation of the proposed project would cause temporary and permanent loss and disturbance to plant communities and loss of habitat for terrestrial animal populations.

Soils. Construction of the transmission line could potentially impact a small amount of prime farmland soils. This would include compaction of these soils and damaging the soil structure during excavation. The burying of soil and loss of soil productivity cannot be avoided by implementation of any action alternative. Increases in soil erosion could occur as a result of construction of all proposed facilities and access roads. During the construction phase localized erosion could increase above natural levels and soil would be deposited downslope. Best Management Practices (BMPs) would minimize erosion impacts during construction, and revegetation of construction roads would mitigate long-term impacts.

Water Resources. Potential increase in flood heights in the Santa Cruz River due to expansion of the South Substation within the 100-year floodplain would be unavoidable.

Air Quality. Vehicle and fugitive dust emissions would occur primarily during project construction. Effects on ambient air quality would be short-term and localized and would not exceed National Ambient Air Quality Standards. For all alternatives, vehicle emissions cannot be avoided from periodic motor vehicle access via maintenance roads.

Cultural Resources. Cultural resources could be adversely impacted by construction of the proposed project. Increased access to the proposed project area has the potential to disturb cultural resources. Where requested by landowners or land managers, TEP would maintain locked gates to new roads required for project maintenance to limit public access.

Noise. During construction, daytime noise would increase in residential areas located near the transmission line right-of-way (ROW) and in areas near the ROW used for recreation. Since this impact is associated with the construction phase, it would be short-term and temporary, and would not cause any significant impacts to human hearing. In the Forest, increased noise could disrupt wildlife foraging and breeding cycles. Therefore, construction would be scheduled to avoid the reproductive seasons of sensitive wildlife species.

Waste Management. Construction of the project would result in the generation of small quantities of solid and hazardous wastes that would minimally decrease the life of existing landfills and increase shipments to *Resource Conservation and Recovery Act* (RCRA)-permitted treatment and disposal facilities. Operation of the project would result in the generation of small quantities of municipal solid waste, such as paper and plastic wrapping materials from new equipment.